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VET sector drives increase in educational export income for South Australia:ABS

South Australia's income from international students in 2009 was $990 million, which accounted for 9.6% of the state's total exports. This was more than treble the income of 2002 and an average annual growth rate of 18.9%.

International students are not permanent residents of the state so their expenditure on tuition fees, course materials, food, accommodation, transport etc., are treated as income from international trade in services - that is, as export income.

In 2002, 2.6% of the nation's international student enrolments in vocational education training (VET) were in South Australia. This proportion increased to 3.8% in 2009.

Between 2007 and 2009, international student enrolments in the South Australian VET sector trebled from 2,961 to 8,919 which was a higher average annual rate than any other sector of education.

Numbers of enrolments in both government and non-government VET providers were similar in 2005. However, since 2007 enrolment numbers have been diverging markedly. In 2005 the number of enrolments in government VET courses (primarily TAFE) was 831 whilst non-government VET courses attracted 971 enrolments. By 2009 the numbers had increased to 1,338 and 7,581 respectively.

The largest increases in international student enrolments in non-government VET courses over the 2002 to 2009 period occurred for 'Society and Culture' and 'Engineering and Related Technologies' while, as a percentage of total enrolments, decreases occurred in 'Management and Commerce' and 'Information Technology'.

In South Australia in 2009, the most popular fields of study for international student enrolments in non-government provided VET were: 'Society and Culture' (23.7%); 'Management and Commerce' (21.1%); 'Food Hospitality and Personal Services' (16.1%); and 'Engineering and Related Technologies' (15.6%).

The full article and South Australian specific updates on State Accounts, Labour Force and Water can be found in the June edition of SA Stats (cat. no. 1345.4) on the ABS website.

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